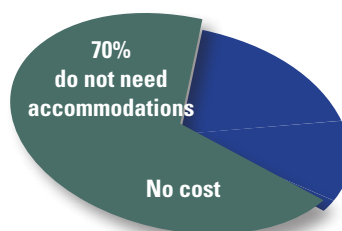


Though rarely needed, accommodating employees who have disabilities yields high returns

According to the Job Accommodations Network (JAN), 70% of employees who have a disability do not need any accommodations or adjustments to their work environment.

For the minority of employees who do, accommodations typically yield high returns. In a survey of employers JAN found that every dollar invested in an accommodation yielded a little over \$10 in benefits such as improved performance, productivity and efficiency. In fact, most accommodations are “high yield,” including:

- Ergonomic keyboards and mice
- Optical character recognition
- Word prediction/completion
- Anti-fatigue matting
- Document holders
- Ergonomic chairs
- Nonfluorescent lighting
- Door openers, handles, grips
- Reorganized workspaces



70% of employees who have disabilities need no accommodations

Studies also show that familiarity with the accommodation process lowers risk for increased legal and turnover costs.



For complete information about accommodations, visit JAN at www.jan.wvu.edu and use keyword “accommodations”

Some accommodations involve assistive technologies

Assistive Technologies are devices and services that increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a person who has a disability. Examples of assistive technologies include:

- Writing aids, adaptive keyboards
- Talking computers, TDDs
- Programming such as speech recognition



For complete information, visit Minnesota STAR at www.starprogram.state.mn.us or contact Assistive Technology of Minnesota at www.atmn.org

SUPPORTING EMPLOYEES

Supported and extended employment supports

Supported and extended employment assist people with the most significant disabilities to become and remain successfully and competitively employed in integrated workplace settings.

Agency supports

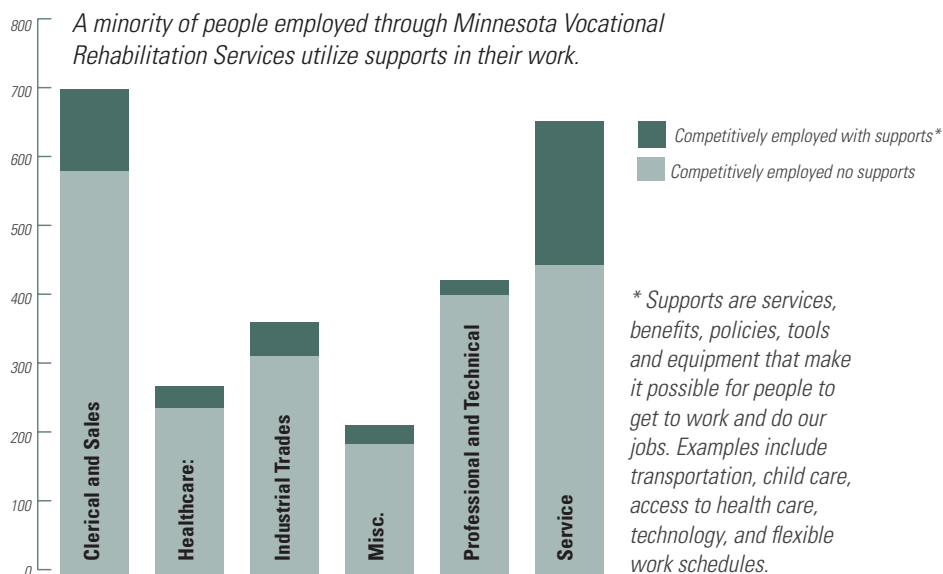
Provided by a state or community-based rehabilitation service agency that places the employee in a job, agency supports facilitate the ongoing services needed to help an employee retain the job, with no fee to the employer. Agency supports include:

- Thoroughly screened applicants.
- Employees' abilities matched to job requirements.
- On-site job training by professionals.
- Additional training, as necessary.
- Follow-up services for the duration of employment.

Natural supports

Natural supports are typically provided by the employer for all employees and are also provided by supervisors and co-workers in the natural course of the workday. These natural supports might include

- Mentoring and supervision.
- Peer training and teaching (learning a new job skill with a coworker).
- Socializing with co-workers at breaks or after work.



Source: Minnesota State Rehabilitation Council 2008 Annual Report

Emergency evacuation planning

Planning will ensure the safety of employees who have disabilities during emergencies, and provide protection against the risks associated with emergencies. A good emergency plan not only helps ready staff to respond, it saves businesses time and money after an emergency.

Communication is key

The first step in developing an emergency plan is to provide for clear communication between employers and employees regarding staff who will need assistance during an emergency. If emergency evacuation equipment is needed and individuals need to be trained, then that needs to be part of the overall emergency plan. At a minimum, employers should provide for the following:

- Emergency alarms and signs showing the emergency exit routes.
- Designated areas for rescue assistance with escape routes, a closing door, a way to block smoke from entering the room, a window, a way to write on the window to alert rescuers that people are in this location; and respirator masks.
- Implementing a buddy system so teams can locate and assist each other in emergencies.
- Testing the plan and evaluating the results to make necessary improvements.

Employee kits

Employee emergency kits help prevent further trauma in the face of an emergency. A kit might include the following items.

- A small supply of food and water (include food and water for a service animal as well).
- Flashlight, radio, extra batteries and a small first-aid kit.
- A whistle to get the attention of co-workers or emergency personnel.
- A copy of the Emergency Plan, which should include emergency phone numbers and any medical information for the first responders.



For more information about emergency preparedness, visit these web sites:

www.disability.state.mn.us

www.codeready.org

www.ready.gov